

Coordinated Streamside Management on Rural Lands in Oregon

Summary

The State of Oregon, working with federal and local partners, will implement a coordinated approach to streamside management. The State believes this coordinated approach will improve water quality and make available more habitat for fish and streamside-dependent plants and animals. The approach will initially focus on agriculture-influenced areas.

Initially, six areas will be selected per year to enter into a four year process (with monitoring for five-ten years) that begins with the identification of a targeted area in which to focus monitoring, incentive-based implementation regulatory measures. The State will purposefully select target areas in different geographic areas to maximize the potential for this investment to be a “learning opportunity” for local organizations that can then implement their own coordinated streamside management work beyond the state-selected areas.

This approach combines the benefits of three distinct, but overlapping, components. First, watershed-level **monitoring** will be deployed at all selected areas to track water quality improvements and to learn and share the most effective approaches. Second, the State will work with local soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), watershed councils, and others to increase **incentive-based conservation** in riparian areas on all lands in the identified areas. This will help local areas attain the goals identified in their area plans. Third, for those lands that are subject to the requirements of the state’s Agricultural Water Quality Management Act, the Oregon Department of Agriculture will ensure **compliance** with the area rules where necessary. This cooperative strategy will ensure a clear “firewall” between those assisting landowners with incentive-based approaches while providing a regulatory backstop.

To initiate this program, **Strategic Implementation Areas (SIA)** will be selected based on need (water quality, habitat), and the capacity and willingness of local organizations to deliver on-the-ground assistance (including potential OWEB funding). It is expected that all areas of the state will eventually have an SIA over time, but initial success will be based on selecting areas that combine the above three characteristics.

Once an SIA is selected and before the program is initiated, state agencies will help the local SWCD or other lead partner to identify key areas to work with landowners. This will include information from the Oregon Department of Agriculture’s compliance evaluation, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s general habitat assessment including limiting factors, and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality’s analysis of shade along streamside areas.

The goal of this strategic implementation approach is to develop a framework that can be used across Oregon counties that combines both voluntary and regulatory measures in a way that provides the greatest uplift to water quality. This approach is intended to support and encourage innovation and local solutions while ensuring landowners comply with the state’s agriculture water quality program requirements.

Over time, it is anticipated that this approach can be used as a basis to develop other tools that ensure both effective implementation and monitoring of non-point source water quality improvements and increased regulatory certainty for landowners.

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Voluntary, Incentive-Based Conservation Overview

As designed under Oregon's SB 1010 (Agricultural Water Quality Management Act), Oregon's agricultural water quality program is built around voluntary, incentive-based conservation with a compliance and enforcement backstop. Part of SB 1010 includes Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plans in 38 areas across the state which identify both water quality problems and opportunities for improvement. Local Advisory Committees (LAC) made up of farmers, ranchers, community leaders, and other stakeholders establish goals based on identification of local agricultural water quality problems and opportunities for improvement.

To support this work through the Coordinated Streamside Management Program, once a Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) has been selected, the state agency partners will work with the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), the LAC, and other local partners to develop a specific implementation strategy for the selected area as a companion to the agricultural water quality management area plan. Implementation strategies will identify voluntary and incentive-based approaches to improving streamside management across all lands in the identified area, whether agriculturally influenced or not. Additional landowner information will also be used to complete strategy implementation.

Incentive-Based Conservation Components in Year 0-1

- 1) **Technical Assistance Funding** - The SWCD or other identified partner will apply to OWEB for a technical assistance grant for SIA implementation. Funding can be used for landowner outreach, monitoring, and project design. Implementation funding is accessible through a variety of funding sources, including OWEB restoration grants, small grants, and NRCS EQIP and other funding.
- 2) **Funding Coordination** - All potential funding partners (typically NRCS and OWEB, but may include others) will be made aware of the strategy to ensure it is built into local strategic processes already in place (local work group and conservation implementation strategy through NRCS, as an example).

Incentive-Based Conservation Components in Year 1-4

- 1) **Landowner Outreach** - Extensive outreach will occur to make landowners aware of the identification of their area for coordinated streamside management. Outreach will ensure landowners are aware of the program and their opportunity to work with local conservation organizations to improve their streamside management. Landowners will have the opportunity to implement voluntary conservation measures.
- 2) **Training and Peer-to-Peer Learning** – OWEB, ODA, NRCS and the Farm Service Agency will coordinate to provide opportunities for training and peer-to-peer learning about effective streamside management, innovative approaches, program funding opportunities, and technical design for all local practitioners, including those with SIAs.
- 3) **Technical Assistance and Project Design** – The SWCD and other local partners work with landowners to design projects that improve habitat and water quality based on the landowner's goals and funding priorities. Funding is provided through the OWEB SIA technical assistance grant.
- 4) **Project Implementation** – Landowners and local partners work together to implement streamside improvement practices with landowners in agriculture-influenced areas throughout the process, either at their own cost or in partnership with funding from OWEB, NRCS, or other sources.

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Monitoring Overview

Monitoring is an essential component of coordinated streamside management. Watershed-scale monitoring can tell the story of whether and how the actions landowners take result in the intended improvements to water quality. Depending on the stream, parameters targeted for improvement may include stream temperature, sediment, nutrients, and/or bacteria. In addition to watershed-scale monitoring, evaluation of specific actions helps local groups learn and share information about the most effective implementation strategies and approaches. ODA and OWEB will engage DEQ and ODFW to develop scientifically and technically robust monitoring strategies, working with local partners to identify the parameter(s) of interest, and providing the necessary training for local partners to collect data and report results. Implementation of the monitoring strategy will document uplift to water quality through time, and provide information to support adaptive management.

Monitoring Components in Year 0-1

- 1) **Monitoring Strategy** – ODA and OWEB will coordinate with DEQ and ODFW—the agencies with extensive expertise and experience with water quality and biological monitoring, respectively—to develop a monitoring strategy. This approach will ensure that accurate baseline information about stream temperature, sediment, bacteria, and/or nutrient levels are available and can be used to show post-implementation progress. The plan will address two scales of monitoring:
 - a. Watershed-level monitoring to identify trends in water quality, and
 - b. Site-specific evaluation to learn and share information about how to implement the identified conservation practices in a way that has the best chances to achieve the intended impact.

The strategy will be coordinated with the local SWCD and/or other local partners prior to implementation. Local partners will be trained in data collection and can charge those costs to a technical assistance grant to be provided by OWEB. DEQ will complete placement of monitoring equipment and baseline data gathering.

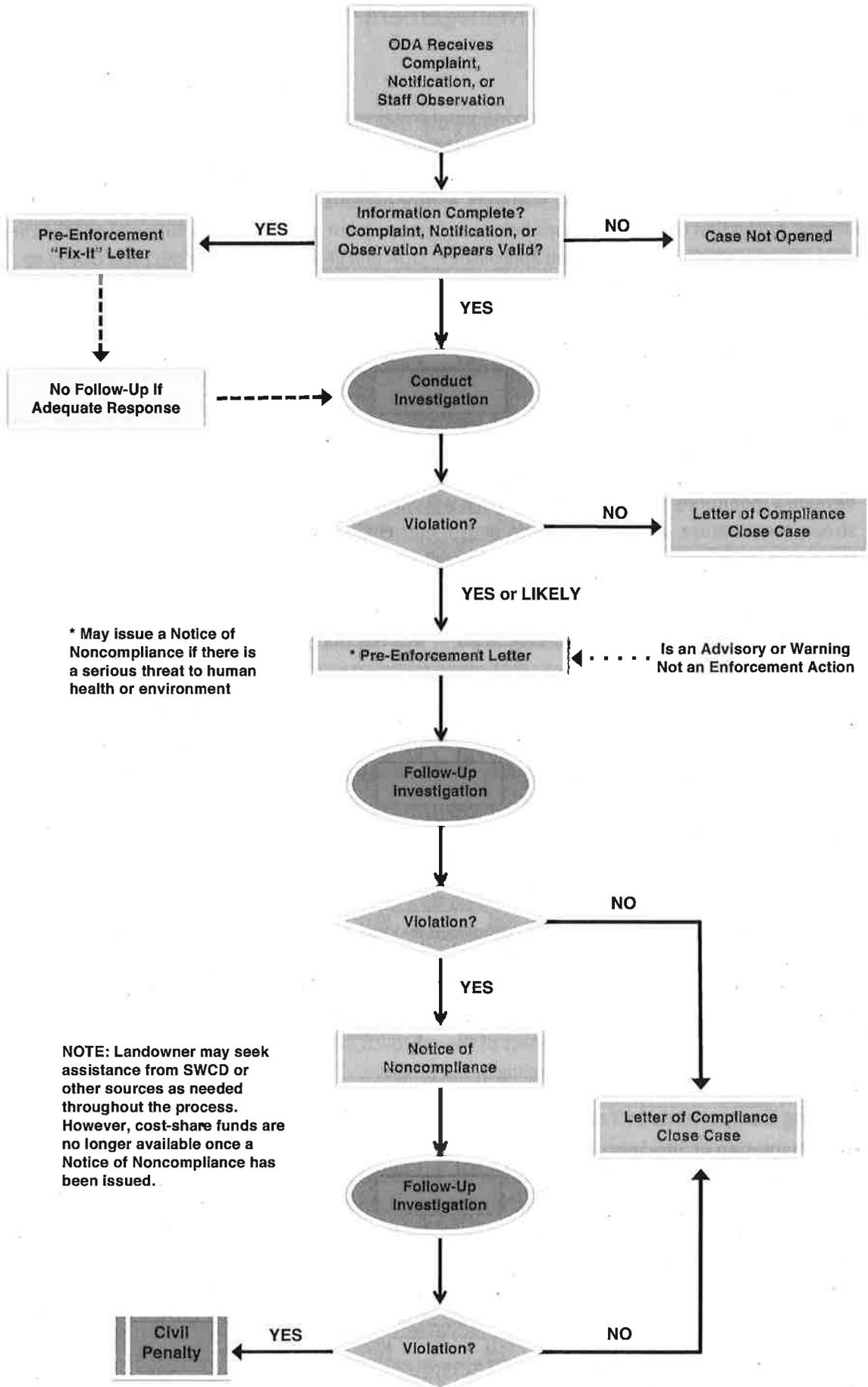
Monitoring Components in Years 1-4

- 1) **Implementation of Site-Specific and Watershed Monitoring** - Monitoring will continue throughout the implementation process.
- 2) **Reporting** – Information about actions completed by local partners will be paired with monitoring data to determine if improvements have been made as a result of implementation. Note: In-stream signals of water-quality effects may not be seen until a few years after implementation is complete.
- 3) **Adaptive Management** - Adaptive management will be a priority for partners, using information from landowners about the effectiveness of the approach, along with data from the ecological monitoring implemented at the beginning of the program.

Monitoring Components in Years 5-10

- 1) **Implementation of Site-Specific and Watershed Monitoring** - Monitoring will continue for 2-5 years after the completion of coordinated work in the identified area.
- 2) **Reporting** – Information about actions completed by local partners will be paired with monitoring data to determine if improvements have been made as a result of implementation.
- 3) **Adaptive Management** - Adaptive management will be a priority for partners, using information from landowners about the effectiveness of the approach, along with data from the ecological monitoring implemented at the beginning of the program.

**Oregon Department of Agriculture
Water Quality Program Compliance Process**



COORDINATED STREAMSIDE MANAGEMENT – STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION AREA (SIA)

Frequently Asked Questions



Oregon
Department
of Agriculture

WHAT IS COORDINATED STREAMSIDE MANAGEMENT?

It's a coordinated approach to improve water quality and make available more habitat for fish and streamside-dependent plants and animals. The approach will initially focus on agriculturally influenced areas.

HOW WILL COORDINATED STREAMSIDE MANAGEMENT BE INITIATED?

Six Strategic Implementation Areas (SIAs) will be selected per year beginning in the 2017-2019 biennium to enter into a multi-year process to implement voluntary, incentive-based conservation in riparian and other areas to help improve water quality; to conduct monitoring to track water quality improvements; and to work toward attaining the goals of the Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plans for that region.

IS THERE FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE?

Yes, technical assistance funding is available for each Soil and Water Conservation District/Watershed Council (SWCD/WSC) conducting an SIA. Funding for conservation and restoration activities will be available through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board's (OWEB's) "open solicitation" and "small" grant competitive processes, and others such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Department of Environmental Quality.

IS THERE A COMPLIANCE/ENFORCEMENT COMPONENT?

Yes. The Oregon Department of Agriculture's (ODA's) Agricultural Water Quality Management Program may initiate enforcement actions if local agricultural landowners are identified by ODA as not in compliance with local Area Rules after extensive outreach and restoration activities are conducted.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF OTHER STATE OF OREGON NATURAL RESOURCE AGENCIES?

ODA and OWEB will coordinate with the local SWCD/WSC, DEQ and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop a monitoring strategy, and help prioritize areas for voluntary, incentive-based restoration actions.

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO THE SIA PROCESS?

1. Based on local partner feedback, funding will be available to the local SWCD/WSC for landowner outreach, technical assistance and to design on-the-ground projects.
2. The process now includes a multi-year timeframe for conservation and restoration work to be identified, planned, and completed, and to implement watershed-scale monitoring to document water quality trends.
3. Connections between local area plans and project funding have been improved to ensure conservation actions achieve the goals of the area plan.
4. State agencies have improved their coordination on water quality monitoring and restoration work.
5. The program continues to provide the opportunity to ensure compliance with local area rules as necessary.

9/17

Strategic Implementation Areas 2015-2017		Coordinated Streamside Management <i>Proposed Process</i>	
June	SIA locations selected	July - September	SIA locations selected
October	Compliance Evaluations conducted Remote and partner verifications*	October	"Opportunity for improvement" evaluation Remote and Partner verifications* Multi-agency "mapping" tabulation*
October-November	Significant/Serious - Immediate investigation	October-November	ODA presents "mapping" results to SWCD for location selection OWEB "holds" \$100,000 per SIA on account**
November-January	Open House letters (two weeks prior to Open House) Conduct Open Houses	November-January	SWCD & ODA develops SIA outreach strategy Monitoring Strategy developed (DEQ, ODA, ODFW, OWEB, SWCD) SIA process - "Soft Opening"***
January	Letters to Lows - No follow up Letters to Moderates - Landowners have 90 days to contact ODA/SWCD	January	Open House letters (two weeks prior to Open House) Conduct Open Houses
		January 2018 - 2022	Landowner Outreach and voluntary restoration Peer-to-Peer Training****
April-May	Moderate follow up request site visit	June-August 2020	ODA compliance follow-up if necessary
May	OWEB Large Grant Proposals due On-going post evaluation		
November	OWEB Large Grant Proposals due	May/November annua	OWEB Open Solicitation
Quarterly	OWEB Small Grant proposals due	On-going	OWEB Small Grant proposals due
<p>\$1M allocated for "restoration. Grant funds allocated by end of biennium and used within 5 years</p> <p>*We field verify our "level of concern" determinations and verify accuracy with SWCD</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; color: blue; border: 1px solid blue; padding: 5px;">DRAFT</p>		<p>INTO THE FUTURE</p> <p>2020-2021 <i>On-going Post Evaluation</i></p> <p>2018 - 2028 <i>On-going Monitoring</i></p> <p>*ODA field verifies the "Compliance Evaluation" for accuracy with SWCD and conducts "mapping" coordination with partners (ODFW/DEQ)</p> <p>**SWCD/WSC may apply for grants funds over a four year period</p> <p>***Soft Opening - Outreach to partners, LAC, SWCD/WSC BOD etc.</p> <p>****Peer to peer Training- OWEB/ODA/NRCS/FSA - effective streamside management, innovation etc.</p>	

